

# Dairy Farmers

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Farm Bill, Congress mandated that USDA reform the program by Oct. 1, 1999.

Chris Galen, a spokesman for the National Milk Producers Federation has been quoted, as saying, dairy farmers will lose \$200 million a year compared to the current system while

consumers will see little impact. greater dilemma.

In a letter to USDA, Dairy Farmers of America said its members were approving the pricing plan reluctantly. "Our 'yes' This is because all other dairy farmers except those in the upper-Midwest will see a decline in their milk prices. But they voted for the change because to have no federal order program would cause a vote does not mean that dairy farmers can live with the final rule. They Cannot. Economically,

the income and livelihood of many dairy farm families will suffer significantly under your proposal," the group said.

The Federal Milk Marketing Order reform process lasted more than three years and involved the dairy industry, the general public, and academia. The process included detailed regulatory impact, small business, and civil rights analyses and extensive efforts to collect public views that resulted in more than 8,000 comments being received.

# Local Tobacco Growers May Get \$2,000 Checks

Lancaster County tobacco farmers may get \$2,000 per grower per year for several years because of a settlement reached with the cigarette industry.

It appears farmers are in line for a windfall as a result of settlement reached this month between the cigarette industry and 14 tobacco-producing states, including Pennsylvania.

The settlement, approved by a North Carolina court, calls for tobacco companies to pay \$380 million this year to the 14 states, according to Joel Ressler, senior deputy at the Pennsylvania Attorney General's office.

The payments will continue for 12 years, but the amounts will be determined annually. Ressler said the goal is to help farmers find new ways to generate a living.

"The thinking is that by then, farmers should have adjusted and moved on to other products," Ressler said. "We want to encourage them to make the transition, but the amount any grower will get is not enough to get them to

stop growing totally."

North Carolina will get about a third of the \$380 million settlement. Pennsylvania, which represents less than 1 percent of the industry, will get \$2 million, with 90 percent of that destined for Lancaster County.

Ressler said he believes there are about 1,000 tobacco growers in Pennsylvania with 900 of them in Lancaster County. Based on those numbers, the settlement works out to about \$2,000 per grower.

Ressler said his agency will be working with the state Department of Agriculture to put together a list of Pennsylvania's growers. The \$2 million will not be disbursed, however, until an appeal over Pennsylvania's portion of the settlement is resolved.

"Each state brought its own lawsuit, and some of them are still pending because there are similar appeals out there," he said.

Dr. Robert Sklaroff, a Montgomery County cancer specialist, is behind the appeal, which recently was rejected by a Commonwealth Court. Sklaroff is asking that court for a reconsideration and has said he will take the case to the state Supreme Court, according to Ressler. He called Sklaroff an "anti-smoking activist" who "doesn't like the deal."

Details on exactly how the payments will provide incentives to begin growing other crops are still being worked out, Ressler said, but he added that farmers are not being given an ultimatum to stop growing tobacco.

Order	No. Producers eligible to Participate	No. of Producers Voting	Percentage of Approval among voting producers
Northeast	18,570	13,921	90.5
Appalachian	4,099	3,226	98.9
Florida			100.0
Southeast	5,099	3,982	98.8
Upper Midwest	23,294	20,013	96.1
Central	7,903	7,703	98.9
Midwest	9,874	6,971	96.3
Pacific Northwest	1,094	1,009	97.0
Southwest	1,457	1,432	97.8
Arizona-Las Vegas	119	116	93.1
Western	906	678	95.9

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